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A Plea to the West

CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

Vol. 4 }

Organ of the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in
North India and Pakistan

{ No. 3

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Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

A Plea to the West

It is in countries like India that Christians have felt the compulsion to seek the visible unity of the Church. It is here that we have known the reproach and the operative which were expressed at Willingen:

Division in the Church distorts its witness, frustrates its mission and contradicts its own nature. If the Church is to demonstrate the Gospel in its life as well as in its preaching, it must manifest to the world the power of God to break down all barriers and to establish the Church's unity in Christ.

When friends in other lands, where Christians have long been settled in their divisions, suggest that here are merely "pragmatic" arguments, may we not remind them that it is as our Lord who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them", and that, if we cannot learn from the bitter fruits of our disunity how alien it is to the Gospel, then we shall be guilty of a most grievous and sinful complacency?

This sense of urgency, of the need to be reconciled to our brother who is our neighbour, has underlain that continued Union Movement in India which has been seen in the building up of the United Church of Northern India, in the coming into being of the Church of South India, in continued conversation for wider union in the South, and in the framing of the *Plan of Church Union* for North India and Pakistan.

All the time, the churches concerned have sought and valued the counsel and goodwill of their partner churches in other lands, and, generally speaking, these have heartily extended their help and goodwill recognising that it is the responsibility of the churches here to pursue that policy which has commended

itself to them as being for the Christian Good of India and Pakistan.

It is only within quite recent months that a new note of warning has been sounded from overseas. The Anglican Church sought from Lambeth an assurance of continued fellowship if it should decide to go ahead with the Plan as it stands. To that it received advice to seek for changes in the Plan, and, apart from this advice, an eloquent silence as to what would happen if the changes were not made. The Methodist Church in South Asia has now felt it necessary to seek reassurance that it "will enjoy full communion and fellowship with the Methodist Church" if it should go ahead, and at the same time has asked for amendments lest this fellowship be endangered. From the General Assembly in Belfast there has come news of what can only be regarded as a serious warning to part of the United Church of Northern India that to proceed with the Plan as it stands will jeopardise their fellowship. In Baptist circles quite similar fears have been voiced by individuals, though there is no official action on which these are based. Examples could be multiplied.

How is this to be explained?

It may be that with the Ecumenical Movement, the western Churches have themselves become concerned with questions of inter-Church relations as they were not before. Today their theologians are working to get to the root of the reasons for Christian divisions. With their resources, they tackle the questions on the grand scale, apparently believing it to be possible while divided to argue the questions out to a conclusion, and apparently also thinking that no great harm is done if in the meantime they must remain divided, it may be for generations more,

until the answers are found. The remote goal is a unity made possible by a successful exercise in research and in logical argument to establish the correct answers on the great problems of polity etc. which divide. Meantime, the Churches go their separate ways; and since, in their debates, some foolish and ignorant things are said from one side or another, feelings are stirred, the debate grows sharp and indignant, and urgent warnings begin to be sent to India and Pakistan lest we be found to be "letting down the side".

It is in this situation, that disquieting evidence is given that the very character of the proposals in our Plan has been overlooked. In particular, has it been understood that this is a *Plan for comprehension*, and not at all a Plan which claims to have settled the arguments? Has it been understood, for instance, that this is a plan which seeks union between Anglo-Catholics, who will continue to be Anglo-Catholics, with non-episcopalians, who have not begun to be convinced that lack of episcopacy has ever deprived them or ever would deprive them of a valid ministry? Has it been understood, again, that this is a Plan for union between Baptists, who will remain convinced Baptists, with those who baptise children, and will continue to baptise children, in full assurance that they are acting in loyalty to the will of God? Has it been understood that we none of us claim to have won the argument in these matters, but that the Plan is an expression of the conviction

that it is not the will of the Lord of the Church that they who are one in their faith in Him should be divided even for such a cause as this? (*Plan of Union*, Part I, Appendix B. 4).

Has it been understood that, when the Churches approved the *Basis of Negotiation*, which they all have done, they deliberately expressed the conviction that our unity in Christ mattered much more than our differences even on such matters as these, and that therefore it is that unity which should be allowed full expression in the confidence that,

being committed to one another in one family, we shall learn the more readily what is His will?

Friends in the West have been sending their advice, and such advice is heartily welcome. But, in all courtesy, we plead with them to remember that they speak out of their own situation and their own experience. We desire and have sought to profit by their counsel, but before they will think to couple that advice with the pressure that is bound to be associated with any word of break of fellowship, we would plead with them to consider such things as these:

May it not be that, in the pressure of circumstances, so unlike their own in the "Christian" West, Christian people may have learned some lessons of the meaning of unity which have been hidden from them?

May it not be that in the intimate fellowship of Christian co-operation and common worship, so much more familiar in these lands than in the West, with its great sufficient denominations, we may have learned more deeply that we are one?

And may it not be possible that through these long years of sustained and hard negotiation the Churches may have learned how some of the ancient barriers may be transcended in Christ?

Finally, let this be our plea: Even if the Plan should be imperfect, as assuredly must be, will our friends in the West recognise that it is the churches in India and Pakistan which, under God, are charged to be witness to the Gospel in their own field, and it they which must freely and responsibly determine whether or not they can approve of this plan? A they betake themselves to this decision, let it be in the confidence that their decision will be respected by their partners overseas, and as they face the future, whether it be alone or in the Union which is now proposed, let it be in the assurance of the continued fellowship of those who have been their friends.



A Prayer of Launcelot Andrewes

Let us pray for the Catholic Church ;

for the Churches throughout

the whole world ;

that is, for their truth, unity and stability ;

that in all charity may flourish,

and truth may live.

For our own Church ;

that what is lacking in it may be supplied ;

what is unsound, corrected ;

that all Heresies, Schisms, Scandals,

as well public as private,

may be removed.

Correct the wandering,

convert the unbelieving,

increase the faith of the Church,

destroy Heresies,

discover the crafty enemies,

crush the violent.

Pray we for the Clergy ;

that they may rightly divide,

that they may rightly walk ;

that while they teach others,

themselves may learn.

No Amendments Now, Please !

UCNI Committee's Reaction to Anglican Request

WE give herewith the action taken by the Church Union Committee of the United Church of Northern India on the request primarily of the Anglican Church for changes in the Plan of Union :

The Convener reported the request of the Working Committee of the Negotiating Committee that opinion should be given not only on the Plan as it stands, with a separate vote on Parts I and II, but also on the likely effect on such opinion if amendments proposed by the CIPBC were entertained. Attention was also called to suggestions for change in the Plan which had been formulated by the MCSA, apparently on the assumption that amendments were now in order, and to the request of the Baptist Churches for clarification of Appendix B to Part I.

After earnest consideration, resolved :

Resolution XI: (i) to record the conviction of the Committee that at this stage it is desirable that negotiating churches should give their decision on the Plan as it is found in the Third Edition and should not introduce proposals which would call for the re-opening of the negotiations, since any such procedure would be highly confusing for those who have already given their decision and would inevitably delay the prospects of union ;

(ii) with reference to the Baptist request for clarification of Appendix B, to note that a special committee was set up to study this matter and to state that, while the Committee is itself satisfied with the Appendix as it stands, it trusts that the outcome of the labours of that special committee will be such that the Baptist churches will find themselves able to enter into union with the other churches.

With reference to the requests made by the Episcopal Synod of the CIPBC, these were carefully studied in the light of the proposals themselves and of articles in *Church Union: New and Views*, including those by Dr. Kellock advocating action to meet the request, and a Memorandum prepared by the Convener to clarify the differences between the Third Edition and the revised

form proposed. After full consideration the following resolution was adopted :

Resolution XII: (i) As regards the form of the request from the CIPBC, the Committee recognises that the proposal concerns only Part II of the Plan, which deals with the Inauguration, and in which no changes can be made once Union has taken place. Nevertheless it observes :

(a) that it cannot be assumed that change in one Part are without implications for the other, e. g. in the provision for the future reception of ministers from other churches ;

(b) that actually the section in which the CIPBC wishes to make changes is precisely the section about which there has been more debate than on any other part of the Plan. To re-open controversy on this point would be to re-open it at the point which has given rise to most difficulty and on which it was hoped that an end had been reached in the formulation of the Third Edition ;

(c) that inasmuch as it was only the wording adopted in the Third Edition which proved satisfactory to many in the UCN and made possible the favourable votes which have now been given, any fresh amendment to that wording would be bound to have serious repercussions throughout the Church. For these reasons, and apart from the merits of the proposals, the Committee deprecates any re-opening of the question.

(ii) As regards the substance of the proposals, after full consideration resolved to endorse the memorandum prepared by the Convener and to ask him to have it published as the opinion of the committee* in terms of which it is pointed out that the effect of the proposed amendments would be (a) to alter the proposed preliminary act of "bringing together the episcopates" into a major step constituting the Episcopate for the United Church ; (b) to alter the next step from its present inclusive form as "the unification of the ministry" into a separate step of "the unification of the Presbyterates" and

*See p. 39

c) seriously to weaken the provision whereby the whole service at this stage will be conducted as an act of worship and waiting upon God by the united Church itself and to re-introduce the conception of a series of discrete acts by the divided churches.

(iii) Accordingly resolved to inform the Negotiating Committee that it is of opinion that the proposals of the CIPBC would not only greatly retard the procedure but

would be very unlikely to find acceptance in the UCNI, and to express the hope that, inasmuch as this section of the Plan was framed in full conference with the Anglican negotiators primarily to meet the difficulties of the CIPBC, that Church will find it possible to take a decision on the Plan in its present form with an appreciation of its implications not only for the Anglican Communion but for all negotiating bodies.

Go Forward with the Plan as it Stands

Unanimous Recommendation of UCNI Committee

THE Committee on Church Union of the General Assembly of the United Church of Northern India met at Serampore in June, and gave intensive study to a considerable mass of material which contained the views and questions of Church Councils and of partner churches.

There was evidence of certain doubts in some quarters, and also concern that the Plan was not yet adequately understood throughout the Church, leading to the suggestion that decision might be deferred for some time more. Over against this, there was considerable evidence of decisions deliberately taken in favour of the Plan by various Church Councils, including some which are known to have studied it critically through its various editions.

In the light of all the evidence, the Committee unanimously reached the conclusions (a) that further delay in reaching a firm decision might not help to promote fuller understanding of the Plan but might instead remove that sense of urgency which is stimulating intensive study of it, and (b) that the Plan itself is now such that it can be recommended to the General Assembly for adoption later in 1959.

It is to be understood that, even after the General Assembly has given its vote on such matter as this, involving as it does questions of constitution, the decision must be ratified by the assent of the Church Councils for which time is required. The Committee is of opinion that this period might be extended from the normal fourteen months to twenty one months (to August 1961) and this would be sometime done to expound the implications of the Plan in areas where it is less fully understood. If, however, the General Assembly's own decision were to be delayed for a further three years, the Committee was of opinion that there could be less sense of urgency and possibly little progress in understanding, while it would mean further delay in the consummation of Union.

The Committee's recommendation itself is based on a careful appraisal of the Plan as it stands and the conviction, now shared by the considerable majority of Councils reporting, that the fundamental evangelical principles for which the UCNI is concerned are not endangered by the provisions now made, and that this is a Plan on which the Church could go forward with a good conscience.

What is now reported is a Committee action. It awaits the verdict of the General Assembly in November; but it does imply that there is much responsible opinion in the UCNI that the Plan can be accepted. The verdict of others is eagerly awaited.

W. S.

And Yet: Proposed Amendments!

Proposals by the Methodist Church in Southern Asia

WHEN the Working Committee met in Allahabad in February, 1959, it had before it not only the official request of the Episcopal Synod of the CIPBC for amendments in the Plan of Union, but also certain proposals for amendment which had been framed by the Commission on Church Union of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia. These were framed with a preamble which referred to the Anglican proposals as they had been received, and which proceeded with the words:

The door is now opened for reconsideration of the Plan. The Commission on Church Union of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia is now compelled to place before the Negotiating Committee the following amendments for their favourable consideration:

At the Working Committee meeting it was pointed out (a) that the Anglican proposals in fact referred only to Part II of the Plan which deals with the procedure for inauguration, and not to Part I which is constitutional, and (b) that such a request as the Anglican Church had made did not in itself commit the Negotiating Committee to any alteration in its request to the Churches for their verdict on the Plan as it stands. It is therefore not clear on what basis it is said that "The door is now opened for reconsideration of the Plan". Consequently, at the Working Committee meeting, the Methodist proposals were not pressed.

It is now reported that, in March 1959, the Executive Board of the Methodist Church passed a resolution "concurring with the views of the Commission on Church Union in seeking the amendments suggested in the report of the Commission".

The amendments thus proposed include the following requests:

(1) That the name of the Church after union be changed to "The Church of Christ in North India/Pakistan";

(2) that the definition of "historic" in the appropriate reference to the Episcopate as "Constitutional and historic" be changed to read:

"By historic is meant the episcopate which is linked with the Church of apostolic

times by an essential continuity of doctrine, of experience and of allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ";

(3) that in para 13 on p. 56 the section which excludes certain possible implications of the proposed act of unification be amended to include the words given herewith in *italics*:

"...the use of this rite does not imply a denial of the reality and validity of the ordination previously received...it is neither ordination nor re-ordination..."

It is clear that such amendments as these would require a large re-opening of the discussions which have led up to the formulation of the Plan in its third edition. It is not altogether clear how far the actions of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia represent a final judgement on the Plan itself; but in terms of the request which has been made to the negotiating Churches that they give their decision on that Plan as it was formulated in 1957, the request for such changes as these would seem to imply that the Plan is not acceptable to the Methodist Church. It may be, however, that the final verdict of the Church remains to be given in their Central Conference at a later stage, if this is so, and if the instructions from the negotiating Committee remain unchanged, then it is to be hoped that the verdict will be given as a clear vote upon the Plan as it was drafted and which was in fact worked out through the years on the basis of agreement on various items, particularly as these were incorporated in the "Basis of Negotiation" accepted by the Churches.

The Plan of Union of 1957 is the outcome of very lengthy negotiations, in the course of which much attention has been given to matters covered in the Methodist proposals for amendment. If at this stage the Plan is found unacceptable, does that mean that we must contemplate a further lengthy period of discussion on the basis of a search for *Union by Comprehension*? Or does it mean that we frankly abandon our hope of any such union and set ourselves instead to the still harder task of reaching *Union by Persuasion*, in the hope that we shall convince others of the errors on points on which we differ?

Lambeth and the Plan of Union

REV. WILLIAM STEWART

(Convener, Delegation of the United Church of Northern India.)

(Note: This statement, which was prepared by the Convener, was carefully studied by the Church Union Committee of the UCNI, and was endorsed by that body as fully representing its views. The Committee made the request that, when the statement should be published, it should be made clear that it had this endorsement—Ed.)

BOTH Dr. Kellock and Rev. W. G. Young have been trying to find a way to meet the new Anglican request for a change in the proposed method of the unification of the ministry. In considering the subject, it is important to be clear that the proposal made by Lambeth, even in the modified form now suggested by the Episcopal Synod or in Dr. Kellock's very similar suggestion is substantially different from what is set out in the Third Edition of the Plan. The differences are at least in the following points:

i. In the printed Plan (Third Edition) the representative act for the unification of the ministry is given as Step 3, and is set out in detail in paragraphs 7-19 of Part II of the Plan (pp. 55-58). It involves the whole ministry (bishops and presbyters) in one single act. This being so, it is perfectly clear that the earlier Step 2, called "The Bringing together of the Episcopates" is just that and no more, a preliminary step designed to overcome any differences between the existing Episcopates of the two negotiating churches which already are episcopal in structure. It is a preliminary step required just because there happen to be these two distinct episcopates, but, when it has been completed, the bishops concerned will then be received as part of the ministry of the United Church in the great act of unification which concerns all the ministers alike.

Under the new proposal, whether it be called a distinct step, or not, this "Bringing together of the Episcopates" is changed into the actual commissioning of the bishops so that they need not participate in the unification which follows. This change is particularly clearly brought out in Dr. Kellock's old defence which appears in *Church Union: News and Views* for May 1959.

(ii) The effect of this change is that "The unification of the Ministry" becomes instead the Unification of the Presbyterates", and

it is in connection with this point that Mr. Young finds himself dissatisfied with Dr. Kellock's proposal, for it does treat the presbyterates of a non-episcopal church as on a par with that of the episcopal churches. It means that the separation of bishops and presbyters within the ordered ministry of the United Church, instead of taking place after unification has taken place, as in the printed Plan, is implied and implemented from the very beginning. Whether or not we approve this change, we must at least understand that it is a substantial one.

In this one may say that to many people a great merit of the printed Plan is precisely that it does provide for unification to be carried out at once, and without any discrimination among the diverse forms of ministry prior to union. It is thus genuinely a Plan for Union between episcopal and non-episcopal churches, which does not (as Mr. Young's alternative proposal would seem to imply) require that somehow or other we must all adopt one basic pattern before we can be unified. Thus the Plan contains no word to the effect that bishops and presbyters form one order of ministry, for the bishops come to it as bishops, retaining in full any distinctive authority which they have held. This is confirmed by the fact that when any of these bishops is called to office (in Step 4) there is no suggestion of a fresh consecration for him. But equally, the Plan contains no word to imply that the presbyters of the non-episcopal churches constituted a secondary form of the ministry. The blessing of God upon their ministry is fully acknowledged and there is no proposal that they should submit to a distinctive rite for them alone. In each case it is the whole ministry which is represented and on which God's further blessing is sought. We have yet to be convinced that this great merit is equally safeguarded in the new proposals.

iii. There is another difference. In the third edition of the Plan an important change was approved when it was agreed that the whole service of unification should be carried through, for all the ministers concerned, by three of their number (one of them a Bishop) who would be authorised to act as the *first fully commissioned ministers of the United Church*, i.e. not as any longer representative of the different divided churches. True, for their own authorisation, these three would have hands laid on them by such representatives of the formerly divided churches. Nevertheless this provision for the act of unification, conducted by authorised ministers of the United Church itself makes plain the fact that the act itself is one essentially of *waiting on God* for His blessing on all. In such an act many would find it possible and deeply meaningful to join. In it the intention is clear, namely to seek from God such blessing as He in His mercy knows us to need. In this, not in a skilful piece of ambiguity about what we really mean, many have sincerely and thankfully believed that we had been led to "transcend" the old, barren controversy about our different orders.

In the new proposals, including their modified form put forward both by Dr. Kellock and the Episcopal Synod, this change is set aside entirely so far as unification concerns the bishops. The old suggestion is revived that the giving of authority is to be carefully carried out by representatives of the previously divided churches, as if each were still a separate entity concerned to authorise the bishops to function in its particular sphere. This fragmentary conception of transfer of authority had never found general acceptance and finds no place in the printed

Plan. It always left a deep uneasiness among those who could not accept its apparent assumptions (a) that each church has somehow control of a fragment of divine grace which it could impart and (b) that the one way of imparting that grace would be a method of laying on of hands. That uneasiness was dissipated for many by the modification incorporated in the Third Edition, whereby we no longer appear to be bringing a fragmentary gift which has been in our possession and control but instead come together in humble waiting upon God by those who know that they are unprofitable servants who may yet look to Him in confidence that He will answer their prayers.

The wording of part of the Lambeth Report seems to make it clear that the Conference failed to grasp the significance of this change, and it may be that Dr. Kellock, who left India before it had been accepted, is not fully aware of the great uplift of spirit which was given to many by its introduction. Nevertheless, if it is to be set aside for a return to the old proposal in so far as the bishops are concerned, this will be a real stumbling block to many.

The Lambeth proposals were prepared by a Conference representative of a single tradition, without the benefit of the direct experience of negotiation which we have known in these countries. While one therefore appreciates the endeavour of friends somehow to meet these proposals, one would dare to hope that even now the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon will give its verdict on the Plan as it was formulated at Pachmari with the help of their own able and devoted representatives.



"There is One Body"*

Rev. Dr. Emlyn Davies, Winnipeg

Co-operation and Unity

MY concern, is with the promotion of the ecumenical understanding of the nature and mission of the Church. Co-operation is one thing; the ecumenical movement is another. Co-operation presumes divisions, disunity and existing independent groups. Through co-operation all these join together to achieve a common goal and it is possible, though it does not necessarily follow, that once they have fulfilled the purpose of their co-operative effort, each participating member returns to its previous state of independence and separation.

The ecumenical movement, on the other hand, presupposes unity. It begins not with disunity, but with the given fact of unity. Its main objective is the realization and the maintenance of this unity which already exists. But its task is vitiated by disunity and division and it is the presence of these alien factors which makes the promotion of the ecumenical movement so arduous and complex in our day and generation. Moreover, we cannot avoid the fact that the unity of which we speak as the fundamental presupposition of the ecumenical movement is the unity of the Church, and this was given to the Church by God.

The One Church and the Many

Here is the crux of our problem. We believe that God has given to the world His Church and that there is only One Church. Yet our presence here today is a historical testimony to the existence of many churches, each maintaining in one way or another that its own existence in separation is indispensable to the *One Church*, and that, if it ceased to be as an existing, separate Communion, something of real value to the *One Church* would be permanently lost.....

In other words, the issue which is raised for us is primarily and basically a theological one and this does not permit of slick solutions either in the name of dogma or of authoritarian statements which cannot be

examined. As a matter of history, the one historical Church was divided in 1054 and from that day to this the Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church have been in schism. The immediate cause of their schism was the rivalry between East and West which had existed for nearly two hundred years previously. This quarrel turned upon rival claims in the political, territorial and doctrinal realms, and even as early as 867, the Pope of Rome was condemned for heresy. This ill-feeling between the East and the West led to the separation of the two Churches in 1054 and the rivalry between them exists to this day.

One of the most recent apologists for the Roman Church—a convert from the Church of England—has an interesting comment on this schism. "There are," he says, "enormous psychological obstacles, which time has not lessened, to the healing of the breach between East and West, where differences of dogma and church order are neither fundamental nor extensive." He adds, "As Catholics we know what will be the dogmatic faith of a reunited Christendom; we do not know what traditions and customs now existing outside the Church are capable of being baptised into its unity." (Henry St. John *Essays in Christian Unity*, 1955. Newman Press, Maryland.)

It is to be observed that the schism is called a "breach" and as such it can be healed. But the basic problem which confronts us is why should any condition in the life of the Church which can be healed, be allowed to continue. What are the grounds for the continuance of "breaches" or "schisms," separation or independence? The limits to which this whole schismatic practice has now gone is to be seen most dramatically on this continent where over one hundred and fifty Christian bodies all claim to be, in some measure, more faithful reproductions of the "primitive church" than any other. The monumental absurdity of this not only causes the proverbial cat to laugh, but must be a constant source of fiendish glee to all the demons of hell. What is tragic is that all Christian Communions, from the wealthy, political-

* Retiring President's address at twelfth meeting of Canadian Council of Churches (abbreviated)

minded Roman Catholic Church to the strangest and most insignificant Christian group, are equally involved. We are all guilty of "tearing the seamless robe of Christ" and we must all carry the same of our pride, our sin, our stubborn self-will and of our common denial of the fellowship of Christ.

The ecumenical movement does not exist to create and then to maintain the unity of the Church. It was born out of and has been continued in the faith and certitude that there is a unity which belongs to the Church of Christ which it is the solemn duty and privilege of all Christian believers to maintain and which no Christian group can deny without thereby being disobedient to the gospel of the blessed God. It is now an accepted judgement of Christian scholarship that there is only one Church and that the one-ness which belongs to the Church derives solely and exclusively from the One Lord, Whose Body the Church is, even Jesus Christ. In other words, *When we speak of the unity of the One Church we are not making a sociological comment. We are speaking theologically.* We are looking at the Church in the light of the gospel and we are being completely faithful to the testimony of the scriptures and to the doctrine of the Apostles when we re-affirm, in our own day, our faith in and our commitment to the One Church, even the Church of God.

The ecumenical movement has been called into being by God out of the situation on the foreign mission field of the Church within which this basic truth was so blatantly denied that it was declared to be a scandal. Instead of the Church existing to demonstrate and

promote the unity which was its God-given gift, the Church committed increasingly and constantly the sin of schism. The "seamless robe of Christ" became a "tattered rag" and instead of the glory of Christ being made manifest, the Cross of reconciliation was made of none-effect.

It is only fitting to insert a caveat here and to say that the sin was schism. It was not diversity. It was not variety. It was disunity. In other words, it is possible to conceive of the witness and mission of the Church being faithfully discharged in diverse ways and according to many manners. After all this is God's way of working and one of the principal results of the charismatic ministry of the Church is that it should be exercised according to the diversity of gifts which God has granted to His Church.

The scandal is not diversity. It is a deeper and a more grievous offence. Perhaps we can appreciate its sinfulness more fully if we remind ourselves of the phrase which we have chosen as the theme of our Council meetings. We have used the phrase, "There is One Body." We are quoting from the Pauline correspondence, and it may be just as well if we recall that he is speaking of the Body of Christ. Nowhere does the Apostle refer to the Church as a "body of Christians." To do so would support the impression that the unity of the Church is a sociological, man-made characteristic. The Church is the Body of Christ and the life of the Church is that life made available to humble and obedient believers by the living, regnant Lord Himself.

(to be continued)



Reprinted from the S. I. C., May 1959.

Joint CSI—Lutheran Theological Commission

An Agreed Statement on the Church and the Ministry*

1. The nature of the Church and of the Ministry within the Church can only be understood rightly within the context of God's revelation of Himself, His eternal saving purpose, His saving act in Jesus Christ His Son and the continuing saving work of the Risen and Ascended Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Church exists by the grace of God and those who belong to it are members of the Church by the grace of God.

2. The Church exists and men are called into the fellowship of the Church in order that through it God may carry out His eternal purpose in Christ. (Eph. 3: 9-11). It is the fellowship of men with God and with one another, in Christ. It is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. As its heart is this fellowship with God, it is at its deepest a reality in the Spirit. We believe that it is God's will that men become members of the Church through faith in the Gospel and baptism into Christ, (Eph. 2: 8-10, John 3: 5, and Matt. 28: 19-20). To be outside the Church by unbelief or to be cut off from the Church's fellowship because of unrepented sin is a serious matter. Yet, in the present state of disunity, nobody of Christians can rightly claim to be in an exclusive sense the Church or look upon its judgements as necessarily inspired by the Spirit.

3. It is God's purpose that the Church should be the place where He and His saving work in Christ are manifest. It is His will that the one, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church be seen in actual communities of human beings, baptised into Christ, to which He can make known His will and through which He can fulfill it (John 17: 21). Because of the continuing fact of human sin, even in the redeemed, the Church is not in any of its manifestations wholly obedient to the will of God. But the Church of God in every place is called continually to turn to God, so that through its life Christ may be set forth.

4. We not only speak of the Church in the sense of the totality of all Christ's People,

throughout all ages and all lands, who are one in Him; and of the Church as the local fellowship of believers who gather in one place. We use the word 'Church' of the Christians in a region and of those Christians who belong to a particular denomination. Where such usage carries with it the implication that other Christians are not members of the Church Universal, it is not in accordance with the New Testament. We do well to recognize that the fundamental unity is God's gift in Christ and does in a real sense appear even where, owing to history, race or tradition, there are such wide divergencies in belief and practice among those calling themselves Christians that we cannot yet see any way towards visible unity consistent with loyalty to Christ and His truth. We should seek to discover and to develop this unity in our one Lord and to express it wherever we can in acts of obedience together. There is under the conditions of the world today need for Christians to discover and obey the will of God in and through a continuing fellowship which covers a wider area than any one local congregation. Where this fellowship, united in the word and the Sacraments, is a manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit and an instrument of God's working, it may be called the Church.

5. The Church is Apostolic in its essential nature, in the sense that it shares in the Mission of the Son by the Father and is empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 20: 21-23). For the accomplishment of this total ministry to the world there is given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Church some form of ministering (I Cor. 12). Every Christian man and woman, has a *Charisma*, a spiritual gift. It is an error to think that some members of the Church are called to be active and the others to be passive. Every member is meant both to give and to receive. The interrelated activity of the whole Body of Christ is the revelation of the interrelated activity of the Triune God, in His saving work for the universe. In relation to the world, out of which God has called his Church, the whole Church is a royal Priesthood, in and

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through Christ brings God to the world and the world to God. To be the Church is to be a ministering community, because it is the Body of Christ who came 'not to be ministered unto but to minister' (Mark 10: 45).

6. In order that through His Church Christ may be made manifest to the world which He died to save, the quality of the relationship between every member of the Church and God through Christ and of every member of the Church one with another in Christ is vital. Therefore Christ has given to His Church a ministry, in the special sense of persons set apart to perform certain functions within the fellowship, which are needed so that the Church may worship God in thankful remembrance of His saving act in Christ and may witness for Him to the world (Eph. 4: 11-12). This pastoral office was given to the Apostles at the first. There is a 'watching over' the sheep and a 'serving' of the sheep, '*Episcopate*' and '*Diakonia*.' Both are found in Christ and both He entrusts to men (I Peter 5: 1-4). We believe that the continuance of such a ministry is necessary to the full well-being and activity of the Church everywhere and in all ages. We believe that by Christ's will it rests upon the Church to determine, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, how from time to time these functions of watching and serving shall be carried out. We see no reason to believe that any one pattern of the Christian ministry has an exclusive claim to divine ordering and approval at all time and under all conditions. If we discern God at work within any body of Christians through a ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, we are bound to take this fact into account in any discussion about Christian unity.

7. This ministry is within the Church and is not to be thought of as possessing any independent relation to Christ or any authority which is not given by Christ in the Church and for the life and work of the Church. It is not the creation of the Church and it is given to the Church not to please the Church but to do the will of Christ its Lord. It is the duty of the Church to be alert to recognize that God has called this or that man to this special ministry, in whatever form, and to set him apart by prayer and, according to ancient custom, laying on of hands, to the office. At the heart of the work of the ministry

must always be the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, for it is in and through them that Christ constitutes and keeps alive His Church.

8. The essential continuity of the Church is in the continued presence and activity of the Lord with the faithful. But, because the Church's obedience is imperfect the Church has not continued perfectly 'in love'. The fellowship has been broken. Because of disunity among Christians, changes in the form, manner of ordination and functions of the ministry have been made without the approval of the whole Church on earth at the time. It appeared to those responsible then, and appears to many today, that such action was inevitable unless they were to be false to the Gospel. Yet, although we may agree that such changes may at times rightly be made, we must insist that they can only be justified if done prayerfully and with the widest possible approval of Christians, subject always to the absolute duty of loyalty to Christ and the Gospel. God is a God of order and we may not lightly change what we have inherited. Yet order itself may be made into an idolatry that turns men away from the living God. All remain under the obligation to seek God's way for the restoration of unity in the Spirit.

9. Every Church makes rules for the selection and setting apart of men for the ministry and keeps a list of those whom it accepts as ministers within its fellowship. In the sense of obedience to its rules, validity is an essential concept of any society. The error comes when we identify the rules of our Church with the absolute will of God, and deny, implicitly or explicitly, that God accepts and uses some other form of the ministry equally with the form to which we are accustomed. It is not for us to determine how and where God can work.

10. It is true that the exercise of oversight (*Episcopate*) was early entrusted by the church to one Bishop in each area. This ordering was for many centuries universal and is still the accepted form among the majority of Christians. We do not hold that it is essential for the existence of the Church, or for the ministry and the Sacraments; or that God has bound Himself to grant through it greater blessing, authority or grace than through other forms of the Church's ministry. It has

been and can be grievously misused, as can every gift of God. But we see value in it as expressing through a person the oversight which is a vital part of the pastoral ministry within the Church. However the presence or absence of episcopacy, ought not by itself

to determine the relationship of one Church with another.

A. H. LEGG,

Bishop, Convener, C. S. I. Synod
20-4-1959. Theological Commission.

Baptists and Church Union

Probhudan Adhikari, Calcutta.

THE Third All India Baptist Assembly under the auspices of the Baptist Union of India was held at Cuttack from May 20th to 24th, 1959. About 60 delegates representing different Baptist Churches and other groups of similar Faith and Order from all over India attended the Assembly. The main theme of the Assembly was "Christ and His Church". Speakers at the Assembly included Rev. B. Pradhan (outgoing President of the Baptist Union), Dr. Blanchard of the Ramapatnam Theological Seminary, Rev. A. B. Masilamani, Dr. P. R. Varma, Rev. C. Devasahayam, Rev. R. G. Beers and Prof. J. H. Thumra.

Rev. William Stewart, Principal, Serampore College and Editor of the "News and Views" was specially invited to give the message in the closing Sunday service.

The delegates were divided into four Commissions to discuss different subjects. One of the subjects for discussion was "Baptists and Church Union". Keen interest was shown in the subject by the delegates, the majority of whom had opted for this commission. The commission was led by Sri P. Adhikari, Convener of the Church Union Sub-Committee of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northern India and Leader of the Baptist Delegation on the Church Union Negotiating Committee.

Only two of the church bodies affiliated to the Baptist Union of India viz: the Council of Baptist Churches in Northern India and the Disciples of Christ are actually engaged in the negotiations for Church Union in N. India. The Commission while discussing the

question of Church Union in its broader perspective also considered the North India Scheme for Church Union. The Commission also had the opportunity of hearing from Rev. William Stewart a report on the latest developments in connection with Church Union negotiations in N. India. Rev. B. Pradhan and Dr. S. Maqbul Masih (Leader of the Disciples of Christ), both members of the Church Union Negotiating Committee also helped in the work of the Commission. The Assembly ultimately adopted the following resolutions in this connection:—

"I: Resolved to request the Committee on Faith and Order of the Baptist Union of India to undertake a special study of the question of Church Union in relation to the Baptist Communion and to

- (a) publish its findings for the consideration of the Union's constituent bodies;
- (b) carry on conversations with church bodies which are negotiating for Church Union;

(It is understood that no action of the committee will commit either the Union or its constituent bodies).

II: Resolved that the constituent bodies be requested to consider the desirability of sending observers to the meetings of the Church Union Negotiating Committee (North India) and of opening conversations with the Church of South India."

All this is perhaps an advance so far as the whole body of Baptists in India and Church Union is concerned.

ANGLICAN PRESBYTERIAN RELATIONS

The Scottish Reaction

Miss E. G. K. Hewat

IN the Church of Scotland General Assembly of 1957 there was presented the Joint Report of a Presbyterian—Episcopalian Commission, a committee appointed to bring nearer the day of unity for Churches divided for centuries from one another. The Report was distinguished by a genuine spirit of friendliness and understanding, a broad common area of belief and doctrine, and the novel suggestion—novel for Scotland—that in the sphere of Church government the peculiar heritage and contribution of each Church be maintained and geared together in the persons of "Bishops—in—Presbytery". This last suggestion was too revolutionary for many minds in Scotland, for points of view still conditioned by the baneful attempts of the Stuart kings of the 17th century to impose bishops on an unwilling people. When, during the winter months of 1958-59 the Report was discussed in the Presbyteries, 39 Presbyteries* unanimously expressed their opposition to the idea of 'Bishops-in-Presbytery'.

At the General Assembly of 1959 when the Church of Scotland Inter-Church Relations Committee presented its Report, it could do no other, on the basis of the returns of the Presbyteries, than state that "the Assembly... judge the proposals in the Joint Report regarding modifications in the polity of the Presbyterian Churches to be unacceptable in their present form". This, however, did not satisfy many, and the deliverance as finally passed ran as follows: "The Assembly are clearly of the opinion that the proposals are unacceptable in that they imply a denial of the Catholicity of the Church of Scotland and of the validity and regularity of its ministry within the Church Catholic". Dr. A. C. Craig, the Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Committee, declared this counter-motion to be a 'disastrous thing', and a departure from the main stream of the ecumenical movement. In his opening speech Dr. Craig warned the Assembly that if it turned down the proposed deliverance,

it would be retreating into a "citadel of spiky Presbyterianism" and he urged that the Assembly 'keep its eyes firmly focused on the ecumenical vision of a coming great Church, in which the divergent Christian traditions will once again be organically united in our land." Yet the deliverance was lost by 34 votes. Nevertheless there was at the same time on both sides a unanimous determination that the negotiations with the Episcopalians should continue—though whether it will be possible for the Anglicans to continue them on the Scottish terms is open to question.

As one reads some of the arguments put forward in the three hours debate, one is reminded of the danger stressed by Kraemer in his latest book, *A Theology of the Laity*, the danger of a Church coming to regard itself as an institution, with a position and status to be defined, rather than as a People of God on the march. "The People of God", he writes, "is ruled in the first place by its future and not by its past or present". To some of the minds in the Assembly the historical mistakes of the past, or the hardly won victories of the past or present seemed to loom larger than the dim but alluring vision of the Church of the future that God was placing before them.

The deliverance that finally won seems on the face of it clear and unambiguous. Yet uncertainties remain. Was the Assembly saying that it did not want 'Bishops-in-Presbytery' in the particular form outlined in the joint Report as presented to the Assembly in 1957? Or was it saying that it did not want Bishops in any other form at all? No one really knows, and the Inter-Church Relations Committee will have to decide in the coming months what line to follow.

In the course of the debate it was interesting to hear a wise word about bishops from an Indian, the Rev. C. Selvamani, and it may well be that it is from the younger Churches of the East, less trammelled by tradition and history, than the older Churches of the West that guidance and leading will come.

* There are 66 Presbyteries in Scotland.

Despite the failure of Dr. Craig's motion to pass, one cannot—if one takes a long view—be unduly depressed. It lost by only 34 votes, 266 to 300. Those who know Scotland, know how deeply the struggles and persecutions of the 17th century have affected both sides, and they can be encouraged by the fact that the Assembly of this year should unanimously decide that negotiations should continue. Churches long separated cannot in a few years be brought together. It took two Branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, some twenty years to become one Church, though they were one in doctrine and government and

divided only on a single point, their relationship to the State. Episcopalian and Presbyterian have behind them three to four hundred years of separation and struggle and conflict, and it is not surprising if at times rocks and shoals should be encountered as they endeavour in Scotland to draw nearer to one another. But, as one speaker said in the debate, "We can only take one step at a time. We do not know to what conclusion the Holy Spirit will lead us, but we will give Him a chance to lead us somewhere". And 'somewhere' is certainly in the direction of the greater ecumenical unity which the Holy Spirit is pressing at this time on the minds and consciences of many.

The Head and the Body

At the Evangelical church meeting at Barmen, Germany, in 1934 it was necessary to take a stand on the very pressing external situation caused by Hitler's usurpation of power and the "German-Christian" movement in the church. The Lutheran and the Reformed theologians assembled there adopted the following definition of the church, based on Ephesians 4:15-16: "The Christian church is the community of brothers where Jesus Christ in word and sacrament through the Holy Spirit today acts as Lord. With its faith as well as its obedience, with its message as well as its order, in the midst of the world of sin and as the church of forgiven sinners, it shall witness that it is his property alone, that it only lives and will live in and by his solace and under his leadership in the expectation of his return."

The unique and gripping note in this is the Evangelical meeting's use of the same biblical passage for the basic concept of the church as Pope Pius XII did in his encyclical. "Christ as the head, the church as the body." However, a careful reading of the explanations of this expression reveals a significant difference. In the Evangelical explanation there is a border which may not be over-stepped. The Church is the body of Christ. Christ is truly in his church, completely and fully. But there can never be talk of any direct identification of Christ and the church. Christ is the free Lord, who in his unfathomable grace enters into his church and lives there, who in his word and work, as he chastises and resurrects, creates life out of the dead, erects his rule in the midst of a world of sin in spite of death and the devil. All this comes through the Holy Spirit in the word and the sacrament.

Quoted from: K. E. Skydsgaard: "One in Christ";

Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia

A Plan for Dioceses and Their Support

The Plea for Regional Consideration

At the request of the Church Union Committee of the United Church of Northern India we reprint the Minute of the Negotiating Committee adopted at its meeting held in August, 1955 by which it sought to have the question of plans for the dioceses of the Church drawn up by those most competent to act: representatives of the Churches in each area:

RESOLVED that the whole matter of the divisions and size of dioceses and the provision of Bishops for them be referred to the Secretaries of the Regional Christian Councils in the areas concerned, with a request for their good offices in calling conferences of the representatives of the uniting Churches within their respective regions to form definite proposals for a desirable division of dioceses; copies of the map and other materials being supplied to them for this purpose.

that the Minutes together with any suggestions received from these Regional Christian Conferences be further considered by the sub-committee on Dioceses and the Support of Bishops before the next meeting.

In some cases the Secretaries of Regional Councils were able to help and conferences were held. In some cases they did not find it possible to help and conferences were not held. Where the Secretaries were not able to take the initiative, Church Councils and other responsible bodies of any of the uniting Churches were invited to take up the matter and ensure that there should be some joint planning on this subject. The reports do not yet cover the whole country.

Has anything been done in your own area?

If not, why not now?

Writers in this Number

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Dr. Emlyn Davies, of the Canadian Baptist Churches, was President of the Canadian Council of Churches in 1958.

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